BANNON OPENS THE WAY FOR POLL

By SIMON JEMISON

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A YEAR after being hounded onto the backbench amid continued criticism of his role in the State Bank disaster, former South Australian premier, Mr John Bannon, has quit politics, clearing the decks for the Premier, Mr Lynn Arnold, to go to the polls.

In giving up his safe suburban seat of Ross Smith, Mr Bannon has also reduced tensions within the party over preselection problems and removed an easy target for the Liberals to embarrass the Labor Coalition Government.

While an election does not have to be held until next April, Mr Arnold is widely tipped to go to the polls in November.

Mr Bannon said he had reconsidered his position "in the interests of the Government and myself".

"My departure will force the Opposition and some elements of the media to stop living in the past and allow the community to focus instead on South Australia's strengths and very bright future," he said.

He believed his government had achieved a great deal during his 10-year tenure as leader, and he hoped time would provide a more positive judgement.

His immediate plans involved postgraduate studies at Flinders

University and in particular study of the federal constitution and the republican debate

He also indicated plans to write a book on his career.

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